



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

August 26, 2005

Charlotte Channing, Editorial Director
Kalamazoo Gazette
401 S. Burdick Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Dear Ms. Channing,

The Department of Human Services is entirely committed to keeping the children in our care safe. Even one child at risk is too many.

Early in the Granholm administration, we identified long-standing problems in the foster care program and took immediate action to address them. Some examples:

- We will shortly have an automated match between foster care providers and the State Police's criminal history database to enable monthly updates.
- We have automated systems to capture case records and increase supervisory oversight.
- Next month, we will unveil a public, web-based report card of foster care agencies, giving our workers and the public a tool to monitor those caring for foster children.

Today, we check criminal history on 100 percent of those seeking an initial foster care license. The findings of the Auditor General in the foster care audit are important issues that we have been and are continuing to work on.

The Department of Human Services' priority is to protect children and families. Under the Granholm administration, we have been strengthening the child welfare system through an emphasis on prevention, early intervention and community partnerships.

Even in these difficult budget times, we continue to strengthen our systems and practices. At the same time, we are enormously concerned with proposals in both the House and the Senate to drastically cut our staff. If we are to make improvements recommended by the Auditor General and continue our national leadership in child welfare, we must have the resources to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marianne Udow".

Marianne Udow